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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 22 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the attached information on "Protection of the rights and interests of children — a priority of State policy" (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 65.

(*Signed*) Murad **Askarov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Protection of the rights and interests of children — a priority of State policy

One of the priorities of Uzbekistan State policy is to provide a harmonious and healthy education for the young generation, as young people under the age of 18 years account for over 40 per cent of the population.

Since the very first days of Uzbekistan's independence, a great deal of attention has been given to the legal, economic and social protection of motherhood and childhood and to establishing conditions for the comprehensive development and education of young people in the spirit of humanitarian values.

Uzbekistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1992. Together with 189 other countries, Uzbekistan has also signed the Millennium Declaration and the "World Fit for Children" document.

In accordance with these documents, in 2007 the Government of Uzbekistan adopted a national programme of action to improve the well-being of children. The programme covers the period up to 2011 and includes ongoing monitoring and study of the situation of children in the areas of education, health care, leisure, family environment, work, vocational training and protection from the adverse effects of modern life.

One of the main ways of safeguarding the interests of children is the undertaking of practical measures to guarantee their rights. Accordingly, the Government has adopted and implemented several significant State programmes in this area.

Children's rights are systematically protected at both the legislative and institutional levels. This systematic approach consists of the adoption and implementation of national programmes including a range of actions to be taken by State agencies and institutions as well as by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NGOs promoting the rights of children and young people have both increased in number and become more active. There is now a nationwide network of NGOs specializing in various areas of promoting and protecting children's rights, including "Kamolot", a national youth movement which supports young people's initiatives and political and leadership activities.

The Foundation *Sen egliz emassan* (You are not alone) supports orphans and children whose parents cannot care for them, children with disabilities and children from poor families; the Children's Fund of Uzbekistan supports initiatives that come from the children themselves (Children's Parliament); the Foundation *Soglom avlod uchun* (For a healthy generation) carries out medical and educational programmes and promotes healthy living and the Forum for the Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan Foundation implements projects for gifted children.

The Government has prepared a national action plan to implement International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138 and No. 182. The plan includes a whole range of legislative proposals to harmonize national legislation with the provisions of the conventions, control and monitoring of the implementation of those provisions and extensive awareness-raising activities.

Uzbekistan submits regular national reports on implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Government of Uzbekistan has developed a national plan of action and has adopted more than 15 legal instruments in order to implement the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee.

At the end of 2009, the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted amendments to the Code on Administrative Liability, increasing penalties for the use of child labour. The amendments were drafted in accordance with the national action plan for implementation of the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, which were ratified by Uzbekistan in 2008.

A decision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health approving the regulations prohibiting the use of child labour entered into force on 15 January 2010. According to this decision, employers are prohibited from employing children for work that is carried out in particularly difficult conditions — underground, under water, at a dangerous height or in a confined space, with dangerous machinery, equipment and instruments, or in unhealthy conditions where children might be exposed to dangerous substances or processes, or to temperatures, noise or vibrations that could be harmful to their health.

It is also prohibited to employ children for work involving lifting and moving heavy loads, long working hours, night work and work which by its nature could be harmful to the morals of this category of workers.

Parents or persons acting in loco parentis are responsible for the health of a working child.

In particular, parents are prohibited from forcing children to work in the above conditions by threatening violence or any type of punishment.

Students who are working in their free time during the school year may not work for more than 36 hours a week, in the case of individuals aged from 16 to 18 years, or more than 24 hours in the case of those aged from 15 to 16 years.

Wages for children working a shorter day must be calculated at the same rate as for workers of the corresponding category working for a full day and students working in factories during their free time should be paid either according to the hours worked or on a productivity basis.

The decision also prohibits the employment of students for work that is not related to their area of study or in hazardous conditions.